

~~said top surface of said plate and that is arranged and adapted to bear against a front of the respective length of trunking,~~

~~said bottom of said top tongue and said flat top of said bottom tongue being separated by a thickness of said plate.~~

14
--15. The device of claim 14, wherein the thickness of said bottom tongue is from 0.2 mm to 1 mm.

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--16. ~~The device of claim 14, wherein each of said two edges has at least two of said top tongue.~~

REMARKS

The indication that claim 8 includes patentable subject matter is acknowledged with thanks. In reliance thereon, claim 8 has been placed in independent form by adding the subject matter of claims 1 and 5 thereto. Allowance of amended claim 8 is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-13 were pending. Claims 1, 8, and 10 have been amended and claims 14-16 have been added, leaving claims 1-16 in the application, with claims 1, 8, and 14 being independent.

Claim 10 was rejected under §112, second paragraph, and has been amended as to form. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-6, 9-11, and 13 were rejected as unpatentable

over GERAERDTS 1,246,585. Claim 1 has been amended and reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Amended claim 1 provides, among other features, that the trunking has substantially plane rear faces adapted to bear against a support surface and that the plate has a rear face adapted to be flush with the rear faces of the trunking. The meaning of "flush" is apparent from Figure 4 of the present application where it may be seen that when one length of trunking fits between the tongues 132 and 133, a rear (bottom) face of the plate 110 would be "flush" (substantially coplanar) with the corresponding rear (bottom) face of the trunking.

GERAERDTS discloses a plate 26 with tongues 27-30 that grab a board. The board does not have a rear face adapted to bear against a support, and the plate 26 does not have a rear face that is flush with this rear face of the board. Indeed, since the tongues 27-30 grab the board, there is no suggestion, motivation, teaching, or reason to make the rear face of the plate flush with the rear face of the trunking.

Accordingly, the amended claims avoid this rejection under §103.

Claims 1-2, 6-7, 9-10, and 12-13 were rejected as unpatentable over FR 2 731 496. Claim 1 has been amended and reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

FR '496 describes a connecting device in which the longitudinal tongues of a plate are adapted to be applied to the rear face of the back of the trunking toward the wall to which the back is fixed and have a certain thickness and therefore a certain stiffness. The longitudinal tongues are received in housings defined in the rear face of the back of the trunking. The housings are generally U-shaped, and thus the back of the trunking does not have substantially plane rear faces as is claimed in amended claim 1. Accordingly, the amended claims also avoid this rejection under §103.

New claims 14-16 are believed to be allowable because the references do not disclose or suggest that the bottom tongue is attached to the rear surface of the plate and has a flat bottom that is spaced from the rear surface of the plate by a thickness of the bottom tongue and a flat top that is substantially coplanar with the rear surface of the plate, and that the bottom of the top tongue and the flat top of the bottom tongue are separated by a thickness of the plate.

In view of the present amendment and the foregoing remarks, it is believed that the present application has been

BUARD S.N. 09/902,610

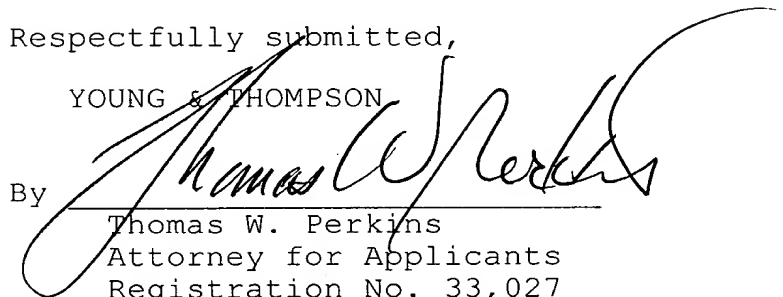
placed in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "**Version with markings to show changes made.**"

Respectfully submitted,

YOUNG & THOMPSON

By

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Thomas W. Perkins". The signature is written over the printed name and extends upwards and to the right.

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October 31, 2002



BOARD S.N. 09/902,610

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

The claims were amended as follows:

--1. (amended) A device for connecting at least two lengths of a trunking adapted to bear against a support surface, said device including a plate for joining backs of base sections of said trunking, said backs of said trunking base sections having substantially plane rear faces adapted to bear against the support surface, said plate having a rear face adapted to be flush with said rear faces of said backs and said plate having on each of its edges adjacent cut edges of said trunking base sections longitudinal tongues adapted to bear on two opposite faces of each back, [which] said tongues are substantially plane, have a thickness from about 0.2 mm to about 1 mm, and are adapted to bear elastically against said opposite faces of said backs.--

--8. (amended) [The device claimed in claim 5] A device for connecting at least two lengths of trunking, including a plate for joining backs of base sections of said trunking, said plate having on each of its edges adjacent cut edges of said trunking base sections longitudinal tongues adapted to bear on two opposite faces of each back, which tongues are substantially plane, have a thickness from about 0.2 mm to about 1 mm, and are adapted to bear elastically against said opposite faces of said back,

wherein said plate is plane and has at least two transverse ends adapted to be placed adjacent two cut edges of two lengths of trunking, and

wherein said plate carries on its top face a pillar with an orifice through it that opens onto the bottom face of said plate, said orifice forming a passage for a fixing member for fixing said plate to a wall supporting it.--

--10. (amended) The device claimed in claim 9, wherein said trunking base sections have lateral flanges and wherein said tongues are adapted to bear elastically on opposite faces of said backs and said lateral flanges of said trunking base sections.--